

Proposed Rule Updating School Meals Nutrition Standards

Improving the health of our children by providing nutritious meals in schools is a top priority for the Obama Administration. This week USDA announced a proposed rule, based on the latest science, to make the first major improvement to the nutritional quality of school meals in 15 years. This is an important component of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative to solve the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation.

- ***The crisis of poor diet and obesity threatens the future of our children – and our nation.*** One in every three children is overweight or obese. Childhood obesity imposes life-threatening consequences on our children's health, substantial economic costs, and threaten our national security.
- ***School meals can do more to support our children's health.*** School meals reach nearly 32 million children each school day nationwide, and many children consume as many as half their daily calories at school.
- ***The proposed rule would update school meals standards based on recommendations from the Institute of Medicine.*** Compared to the current requirements, the proposal would significantly increase the amount of fruit and vegetables provided at lunch, offer more whole grains substantially, and serve our children lowfat or nonfat milk with meals

USDA recognizes that the proposed changes may be as challenging as they are important. A dialogue with schools and communities about the new standards – and practical strategies to reach them – is a critical step in the process of making them a reality for our kids. School meals programs are a partnership between USDA, State agencies and local schools.

Though improvements to school meals will be a challenge for USDA and its partners, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act passed and signed by President Obama last year will increase the reimbursement rate for school meals the first time in decades and provide new tools and strategies to help. USDA will support and assist schools by working closely and creatively with our many partners.

Working together, USDA and its partners can make these changes happen in every community across America. Our children deserve nothing less.